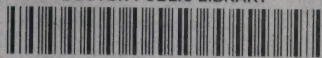


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THE AMERICAN SOCIETY
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JOSEPH S. C. F. FREY
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A STUDY IN AMERICAN
JEWISH HISTORY

BY

LEE M. FRIEDMAN



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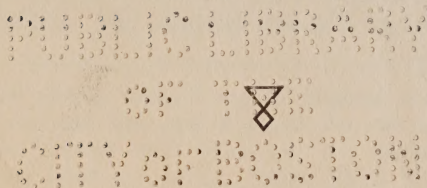


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THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR MELIORATING
THE CONDITION OF THE JEWS, AND JOSEPH
S. C. F. FREY.¹

A hundred years ago, when the United States was practically still a fringe of states along the Atlantic seaboard, and its total population was under ten millions, it is estimated that there were not more than 3000 Jews in the country.² New York City, then as now the center of Jewish population, was said to have fewer than a thousand Jewish inhabitants.

Spanish and Portuguese Jewish immigration had by this time entirely ceased, and the tide of Jewish immigration from Germany had not yet begun; only a few straggling Jews were still coming to America from Europe. Indeed, immigration to the United States was hardly an important factor for the period between the War of 1812 and the year 1840. Perhaps there is no time in American history when the nation was so homogeneous and so insular as in the two decades from 1820 to 1840. It is this setting into which the first Jewish settlers, the Spanish-Portuguese of Colonial times, had been absorbed, and this background into which the next cycle of Jewish immigrants, the German Jews, was to fit.

While succeeding generations had modified the religious feeling that had driven the original settlers to America, the nation was still pre-eminently puritanical and Calvinistic and evangelical. The minister was still the outstanding

¹ "Most of the people, while I was in England pronounced it generally as if written free; and I myself got into the habit of doing the same."—Judah and Israel, or, the Restoration and Conversion of the Jews and the Ten Tribes, Third Edition, much enlarged. By the Rev. Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey. Prefixed by the author's narrative and his portrait; New York 1840, p. 22.

² Am. Jewish Hist. Soc. Pub. No. 6, p. 141.

figure of American intellectual and social leadership. Religious controversies were still exciting activities in community life.

Nothing, perhaps, will better illustrate and interpret the attitude and viewpoint of this period towards the Jews than the career of Joseph Simon Christian Frederick Frey in America. It is to be remembered that to most of America the Jews were then still a mysterious Biblical nation which, to demonstrate the strange truth of prophecy, had survived to modern days. Outside of a few centers like New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, and Savannah, most Americans only knew the Jew by hearsay. He was a strange figure who excited their curiosity as they read their Bibles and listened to their Sunday sermons. This was the period when America was heedless of the welfare of the native redman, whom it was gradually pushing from his hunting grounds in the great western territory which Lewis and Clark had only recently traversed for the first time. The wrongs of negro slavery had not yet made any wide appeal to American sympathy. Philanthropy was cocksure and dogmatic, controlled by church organizations as a field of activity for religious endeavor. Domestic problems seemed rather commonplace, so the heathen of the far East and of Africa and the infidel of an effete Europe offered the great, alluring appeal to their reforming and missionary zeal under the direction of church leadership.

Joseph Samuel Levi was born at Mainstockheim in Franconia, Germany, September 21, 1771, the third child of Samuel Levi, a private tutor in a Jewish family.³ By the

³ Frey was most unctuously and prolifically autobiographical upon every least occasion. Almost all of his published works are preceded by an autobiography. His sermons and speeches are similarly crowded. There are three publications which are in whole or in large part his autobiography, from which the material

age of six he had been taught by his parent to read Hebrew. At the age of eighteen he was teaching Hebrew at Hesse. At twenty-one he was also Chazan at the Synagogue, and later became a Schochat. About this time his mother had obtained the contract for supplying a part of the Prussian army with grain and provisions at Frankfurt a/M., and he returned home to assist her. He soon proved a failure at this and started to return to Hesse, undertaking first to travel a little. A Christian travelling companion pointed out to him the uselessness of the old Jewish ceremonial laws as foretold by the prophet Jeremiah in the passage: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband to them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will write my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts: and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Joseph Levi's interest was so

for this account of him is drawn: a pamphlet entitled: "Narrative of the Rev. J. S. C. F. Frey"; a book originally published in England in 1809 and of which the title page of the first American edition, reprinted from the third English edition, reads: "The Converted Jew or Memoir of the Life of Samuel C. F. Frey who was born a Jew But is now a minister of the Gospel in London in which are described Jewish Customs and Ceremonies 'Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul . . .' Ps XVI 16 'This shall be written for the generations to come; and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord . . .' Ps CIII 18 To which is added An address to Christians in behalf of the Descendants of Abraham Boston Published by Samuel T. Armstrong Theological Printer and Bookseller No. 50 Cornhill 1815" (this book passed through seventeen editions); and "Judah and Israel" (see note 1).

excited thereby in Christianity that he followed this companion to Rostock.

Having failed to catch up with him at Rostock, Levi was informed that no Jew was allowed to remain in that town for a single night without permission from the magistrate, for which a certain sum had to be paid. However, he persuaded the authorities that, although a Jew, he had come to that place to inquire into the truth of Christianity and to embrace that religion if convinced of its veracity. He was thereupon taken in hand by the ministers of the neighborhood for instruction. In the meantime he was obliged to learn a trade, and became a shoemaker.

At New Brandenburg, May 8, 1798, he was publicly baptized. In accordance with the practice in Germany for a converted Jew, he was given a new name—three additional names, Christian Frederick Frey⁴—so that thereafter Joseph Simon Levi became Joseph Simon Christian Frederick Frey.

After working at his trade until 1800 in Berlin, he entered a newly established missionary seminary. In 1801 he was sent to the London Missionary Society to assist in a proposed African missionary expedition. The mission was detained in London many months for lack of a ship. While waiting, Frey learned some English, and was then invited by the Society to stay in London to preach to the Jews. He was sent to a missionary seminary at Gosport for further instruction in English, he in turn giving instruction to the pupils in Hebrew. While teaching here, Frey composed his Hebrew grammar, which was printed

⁴ "The first expressive of the religion I embraced; the second, which signifies rich in peace, to remind me of the text from which he preached on the occasion, viz: John VIII 32, 36, 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free'—Free in English, signifies the same as Frey in the German language."

in 1811 and by 1859 had reached an eleventh edition.⁵

Perhaps this is an appropriate place to interrupt the narrative to say a word of Frey's Hebrew scholarship. Before the publication of the grammar, he had edited an edition of Van der Hooghts' Hebrew Bible (1811). His next publication was a *Biblia Hebraica*. In 1816 there appeared by him a Hebrew, Latin, and English Dictionary, which by 1842 had reached a third edition. In New York he published a Hebrew Reader. There also appeared a Hebrew Students' Pocket Companion.⁶ Of the merits of his scholarship I am not competent to speak, but in the new edition of the grammar for the New York edition of 1823 Frey writes: "This is a new edition of the author's own grammar published in London in 1811. This observation appears to be necessary lest he should be charged with plagiarism by those who have seen 'a Hebrew grammar, published at Harvard College in 1817 by Professor Willard' in which almost every Rule and Exercise appears to be taken from the above edition of 1811, with the exception of the chapter on Syntax and some alteration in the Pronunciation."

In 1805 Frey began his activities in London and continued to work under the Missionary Society until 1809. He then became connected with the newly founded "The London Society for promoting Christianity among the Jews," of which he himself had been one of the organizers. By 1815 the affairs of this Society had gotten into such bad shape that, in order to save it, it was turned over to the Episcopalians, and Frey terminated his connection with it.

⁵ A Hebrew grammar in the English Language by Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey, London (N.D.). In the preface to an American reprint of the grammar, published in New York in 1823, Frey says that of the grammar "a large edition was soon disposed of . . . it has been reprinted and several editions have appeared in an abridged and slightly altered form."

⁶ A second edition of this was published in New York in 1835.

He turned to America, "where though inhabited comparatively by few of my Jewish brethren, yet the harvest is truly great, and the labourers comparatively few, and a much brighter prospect for the comfortable support of a growing family"⁷ appealed to him, so he sailed for New York July 23, 1816.

In this country in the meantime Frey's publications had had some circulation. While the spirit which had awakened interest in Jews and Jewish learning among the Puritans⁸ had died out, some interest had been re-awakened in converting Jews to Christianity. On December 2, 1813, at a meeting of the Consistory of the Reformed Dutch Church in New York, attention was called that "on this side of the Atlantic" nothing or next to nothing had been done to convert the Jews, and a resolution was introduced that the Reverend Classis of New York take the subject into consideration. At its meeting October 13, 1814, a committee of inquiry on the subject was appointed, which in turn appointed a sub-committee to prepare a report. Such a report was prepared, but, owing to various causes, it was not presented to the committee until September 18, 1816. There appears this entry on the minutes of this committee meeting: "Mr. Joseph S. C. F. Frey who had lately been connected with the Society for Conversion of the Jews in London and had recently and unexpectedly arrived in this country was providentially present at the meeting." The report was approved and ordered presented to the Classis. This was done, and at the meeting of the Classis the report was accepted and entered upon

⁷ In 1806 Frey was married to Hannah Cohen, a converted Jewess. They had four children previous to their coming to America, and five afterwards. Three sons and three daughters survived him.—Sprague's *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 6.

⁸ See "Hebrew Learning and the Puritans." *Am. Jewish Hist. Soc. Pub. No. 20*, p. 31. "Cotton Mather and the Jews." *Am. Jewish Hist. Soc. Pub. No. 26*, p. 201.

the minutes of the Classis. As a result, on December 30, 1816, at its next meeting, a new society was formed, under the name of "The American Society for Evangelizing the Jews."⁹

Frey brought with him to America both recommendations and letters of introduction, so that his career here began immediately. As a Congregational minister he commenced to preach in a school-house in Mulberry Street, New York. This place soon proved too small, and the congregation purchased a place of worship in Pearl Street. In 1827 he became a Baptist and in the following January became minister of a Baptist Church in Newark, N.J., where he continued until 1830, when he accepted a call from the Church at Sing Sing, N.Y., where he continued two years. His real importance and influence for America was, however, in his efforts and work in connection with the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews.

Frey's story of the origin of this society begins with long verbatim extracts of a letter received by him from D. Marc, "one of my converted Jewish brethren Missionary to the Jews at Frankfurt-on-the-Main," proposing the establishment of a Christian Jewish settlement. Marc pointed out that the work of converting Jews was seriously handicapped by the problem of what to do with them after they were converted, as they seemed then not to fit

⁹ This account is taken from a pamphlet entitled: "An account of the origin and formation of The American Society for Evangelizing the Jews"; with its Constitution and an address to the Public, New York, 1817. The first officers of the Society were Dr. Philip Milledoler, D.D., President, Peter Wilson, LL.D., Vice-President, John E. Caldwell, Corresponding Secretary, Rev. Alexander Gunn, Recording Secretary, Thomas Storm, Treasurer, and "the other managers" were Rev. John Willies, Rev. J. M. Matthews, Rev. R. B. E. McLeod, Rev. John Knox, Mr. Isaac Sebring, Mr. Matthias Bruen, Mr. John Nitchie.

into either the Jewish or the Christian community, and suggested "all these difficulties might be removed by forming a Christian-Jewish settlement." Frey was asked "whether you would be willing to form a society of proper persons to assist in this undertaking." "The assistance necessary would be (1) to select and procure a proper place for a settlement for 200 families, (2) To facilitate, as much as possible, their passage from Europe in American vessels, (3) To assist them in case of necessity, during the first year."

Immediately Frey translated the letter and laid it before the Board of Trustees of the Society for promoting Learning and Religion of Morris County, N.J. He himself was one of the Trustees, and he persuaded them to invite Mr. Marc to come to America at the Society's expense to act as agent in carrying out this plan. Mr. Marc declined the invitation, as he had then connected himself with the London Society. Mr. Frey was then appointed one of a committee of two to consult with ministers and others, and especially with Dr. Boudinot, on the expediency of forming a society for the purpose of colonizing and evangelizing the Jews.

The Rev. Elias Boudinot was then president of the American Bible Society and author of the then recently published "A Star in the West, or a Humble Attempt to Discover the long lost Ten Tribes of Israel."¹⁰ On account of advanced age, he was living in retirement at Burlington, where Frey visited him in November of 1819. As a result of this visit Boudinot gave Frey a letter approving of the scheme and recommending that they "revive, as soon as convenient, the late Society for Evangelizing the Jews, established in New York a few years since" to undertake this work.

Evidently it was not found possible to revive the Society

¹⁰ Trenton, N.J., 1816.

for Evangelizing the Jews, for Frey proceeded at once to present Boudinot's letter to the ministers of the different denominations of New York and invited them to attend a meeting to consider the expediency of forming a new society. This is his own story of the formation of this new society :

"At this meeting, after a full discussion of the subject, it was resolved to have another meeting, and that every minister present was to bring with him two lay members of his congregation. Accordingly, a large meeting took place, when it was unanimously resolved, that it is expedient to form a Society for colonizing and evangelizing the Jews; and at the next meeting, held on the 8th of February, 1820, the Society was actually formed, a constitution adopted, officers chosen, and I was appointed to apply to the Legislature for a charter. Accordingly, I went to Albany, where at first I met with considerable discouragement, owing to the nature of the application being novel in its kind, and radically different from other Societies. However, having given public notice that I intended preaching a sermon on the past and present state of the Jews, a large assembly was collected, among whom were many members of the Legislature, and a great interest excited. The very next day, the subject was introduced into both Houses, and referred to a committee. While the subject was in the hands of the committee, some objections were made against the words 'colonizing and evangelizing'. I agreed to the proposal of erasing both words out of the title, and substituting the word 'meliorating', and under this title the Society was incorporated by an Act, passed on the 14th day of April, 1820."

The purposes of the Society were :

"The object of this Society is to invite and receive, from any part of the world, such Jews as do already profess the Christian religion, or are desirous to receive Christian instruction, to form them into a settlement, and to furnish them with the ordinances of the Gospel, and with such employment in the settlement as shall be assigned them; but no one shall be received unless he comes well recommended for morals and industry, and without charge to this Society; and both his reception and continuance in the settlement shall be at all times at the discretion of the directors."

Three years went by without any activity on the part of the Society until 1822, when Frey resigned from the pulpit which he was then filling and became the agent of the Society. The first report of the Society was printed in 1823.¹¹ This report shows that, although the Society had gotten well under way, as Frey has explained, "they could not commence their operations for want of Jews."¹² In fact, so far as the report shows, their sole touch with Jews seemed to be confined to Frey and to a recently arrived converted Jew, Jadownicky, whom they were educating at Princeton. This Jadownicky had been sent to America as special agent of a German nobleman, Count Van der Reeke, to the Society with a proposal for the Society to raise funds for him to establish a Christian Hebrew colony on his estates on the Rhine. The report also showed that the late President, Dr. Boudinot, had left to the Society a tract of land for a Jewish colony, or, if the Society elected, it could receive \$1000 instead. The Board had decided that the land was too remotely situated, and elected to receive the money. It was further reported that the Committee on Ways and Means had advertised to receive proposals for 15,000 or 20,000 acres of land and had then many proposals under consideration. Attention was also called to a monthly publication recently started under the name of "Israel's Advocate."

In 1824 the Society made an attempt to found a settlement for "agricultural and mechanical operations" of its

¹¹ The First Report of the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews, presented May 9, 1823, with an appendix, New York, 1823.

¹² Judah and Israel, p. 89. The second report of the Society shows that the Society had increased its fold of converted Jews by some recent arrivals from Europe whom the Society was then supporting: Mr. Erasmus H. Simon and his wife, "a Scottish lady," Frederick Gustavus Prinker, and John Edward Zadig.

Jews.¹³ A committee was appointed to prepare a plan, and "in order to facilitate this object the Board shall procure as much land as will afford a site for the necessary buildings, and the contemplated mechanical and agricultural operations." The outline of the plan was that "a farm shall be stocked, and furnished with suitable implements of husbandry. The produce of the farm shall be considered common stock for the support of the different members of the settlement; and an experienced farmer shall be placed thereon to manage its concerns. All the members of the settlement are to be considered as a band of brethren, governed by the laws of our Divine Redeemer, and associated together for the purpose of aiding each other in the concerns of the life that now is, and of that which is

¹³In the second annual report (1824) the basis on which the Society was proceeding was explained, in a way that was novel to the Americans of that period, as follows:

"It is a matter of undisputed Scriptural History, that no nation was ever more attached to agriculture than the Jews in Palestine; and that it was only for the short period in which Solomon sent his ships from Ezion-zaber to Opher, that they engaged in commerce. And though it must be conceded that since their dispersion, no people were ever so averse from agriculture; yet it must be permitted to assign the true reason, a reason which the objector will not deny, and which will justify us in the course we intend to pursue. It is this: because the Jews in their dispersion have almost everywhere been denied the privilege of acquiring and cultivating land. Commerce, therefore, was the only road left open to them, particularly the retail trade, which, as it offers only small and precarious profits, naturally produces a rapacious disposition. The result of a fair experiment will no doubt prove, that in this respect, the character of the Jew, like that of all other men, is the effect of education and of circumstances; and that, they have only to be restored to the privilege of acquiring real estate, a privilege which is secured to them in this free and happy country, in order to revive all that love of cultivating the soil, and all that delight in pastoral occupations, which characterized them on the mountains of Gilboa, and the vales of Bethlehem."

to come." Temporarily, in the environs of New York, the Society hired a house and three acres of land "as a place of reception for such Jews as may from time to time come to this country, where accommodation will be provided for them, AS ONE FAMILY at the expense of the Society; and whence, AT THEIR OPTION, they may locate on our Agricultural Establishment, or engage elsewhere, in any employment, under the auspices of the Board."

Besides this attempt, however, the Society made two later attempts to establish a Jewish Christian colony. In 1825 the Society leased a farm of 400 acres in Harrison, Westchester County, N.Y. Frey was installed in the existing farmhouse.¹⁴ That attempt was soon abandoned. In 1827 the Society purchased a farm at New Paltz, which was later sold at auction by it in 1835, after it had become an acknowledged failure. Indeed, at the time of its sale, it was described in the report of the Society as "a large farm . . . not only wholly unproductive, but going rapidly to decay for the want of repairs," and it was said that "The settlement, as such, had fallen through beyond resuscitation, as early as 1831, since which time the farm has been regarded in no other light than as a mere article of property, or form of investment."¹⁵

At its annual meeting in 1824 the Society was in flourishing condition. Its income was in excess of \$17,000. It had upward of two hundred auxiliary branches, from Maine to Georgia,¹⁶ and, besides, a close connection with six flourishing independent sister organizations.¹⁷ "Israel's Advocate" had reached a circulation of 20,000. The

¹⁴ Third Report (1825) of the A.S.M.C.J.

¹⁵ Thirteenth Report (1836) of the A.S.M.C.J.

¹⁶ In its third report the Society in 1825 enumerates 282 such branches.

¹⁷ The Massachusetts Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews.

The Northampton Jews Society.

Reverend Frey was becoming a well known figure, traveling all over the country and preaching in churches of all denominations.

"Israel's Advocate" or "The Restoration of the Jews Contemplated and Urged" was a rather commonplace combination of reprints of European versions of Jewish conversions, of speeches and sermons on the subject, of reports of Frey's activities, of reports from branch societies, and of acknowledgments of contributions. One of the direct effects of "Israel's Advocate" was to stir up considerable feeling in the Jewish community, and S. H. Jackson as editor and Louis Emanuel as publisher, to counteract the effect of "Israel's Advocate" in spreading false ideas about the Jews, proceeded to publish a monthly paper under the name of "The Jew,"¹⁸ which has been described as "the first Jewish periodical in America."¹⁹

I find little evidence of conversion of American Jews to Christianity through Frey²⁰ or his Society, and Jackson asserts that there were no converts.²¹

The Boston Ladies Society.

The Female Society of Portland.

The Portland Society.

The Providence Society.

¹⁸ The Jew, being a defence of Judaism against all adversaries and particularly against the Insidious attacks of Israel's Advocate; edited by S. H. Jackson, New York, 1824.

¹⁹ American Jewish Hist. Soc. Pub. No. 3, p. 134. Dr. Kohut there states that there are only two copies of this known to be extant. This is erroneous, as I possess a copy and know of at least another besides those described.

²⁰ His friend Sprague, writing of Frey after his death, says: "His success, if measured by the number of conversions to Christianity effected under his ministry was not very great"; and again: "It must be acknowledged that Mr. Frey's labours, so far as respects his own people, never seemed to mature into very much of abiding fruit. . . ."—Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. 6, p. 761.

²¹ The Jew, p. 149. "Up to May 1826 the Board has never had under their care more than seven Jews in these six years—that

Still the effect of the Society's work on the American people as a whole in formulating its ideas of Jews and expressing its attitude towards them is not to be minimized. "Israel's Advocate"²² reached homes that had no other information about modern Jews. The Society's auxiliaries were comparatively almost as wide-spread as we have recently seen Red Cross Branches. They reached into many small and isolated communities. Between the years 1816 and 1837 Frey preached 5147 times, travelling over 50,000 miles, covering a very large number of the cities and even villages from one end of the country to the other. His coming into a community was a local event of note,²³ and Frey knew well how to excite curiosity in himself as a strange creature of mystery who, through the graciousness of God, had now become one like themselves.²⁴ But at the same time the Society was creating throughout the country a broad humanitarian feeling and interest for the Jews.²⁵ Perhaps this can be summarized in an extract from the Society's second report:

"All the Christian nations of the old world are deep in the guilt of persecuting the Jews; and for this they need national expiation. The historians of Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and England, present cruelty after cruelty, nothing but a tissue of expulsions, of oppressions, and of massacres, of that hapless race. And although it must be conceded that

but two remain at present under their care . . . one learning a trade and the other infirmed."—Fifth Report (1827) A.S.M.C.J.

²² "With the close of 1826 the publication of Israel's Advocate concluded"—Fifth Report (1827) A.S.M.C.J.

²³ Thus in the *Annals of Salem, Mass.*, edited by Joseph B. Felt, vol. 2, p. 608, the following is noted: "1822 Mr. Frey a converted Jew preaches in the afternoon at the South Church and in the evening at the Tabernacle. Collections are taken for his object."

²⁴ "His manner, both in and out of the pulpit, was characterized by great unction and simplicity, while the story of his eventful life enchained all and melted many."—Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. 6, p. 764.

²⁵ See Appendix.

the finger of God is seen in these sufferings, pointing to their great and unrepented transgressions in rejecting and crucifying their Messiah, yet this forms no excuse for those who have added to their afflictions, and rejoiced in the evils which have befallen them. . . .

"By the hope then of averting the curse, and inheriting the blessing, let the American People sympathize with and endeavor to assist the Jews in their emancipation from the intolerance of the old world, and the moral debasement of unbelief in Jesus Christ. And let the American Society endeavor to restore them to their political rights—to those virtues and talents which generally follow in the train of liberty, and especially to those privileges and hopes which are connected with the saving influence of the Gospel and of the grace of God, our Savior."

On his own story Frey was an aggressive and self assertive character. He provoked controversies. He was constantly engaged in disputes with his associates. His character was publicly assailed and grave accusations made against him. Loyal Jews attacked both him and his works. An anonymous, bitter attack on him was published in New York, the first year he began his work there, under the title of "Tobit's Letters to Levi,"²⁶ while in 1820 another anonymous work, entitled "Israel Vindicated," emanated from "An Israelite."²⁷

In 1826 Frey resigned as agent of the Society and again took up his work as a minister. During this period he wrote "Joseph and Benjamin; or a series of Letters on

²⁶ Tobit's Letters to Levi, or A Reply to the Narrative of Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey. Submitted to the consideration of Christians of every denomination whether he is what he describes himself to be a converter of Jews. New York, 1816. The work, "printed for the author," states that the writer is not a Jew and that his object is to show the absurdity of Frey's work.

²⁷ Israel Vindicated Being a Refutation of the Calumnies propagated respecting the Jewish Nation, in which the objects and views of the American Society for Ameliorating the Condition of the Jews are investigated. By an Israelite. See American Jewish Hist. Soc. Pub. No. 3, p. 134.

the Controversy between Jews and Christians, comprising the most important doctrines of the Christian Religion." During this time he was also engaged in publishing a periodical called the "Jewish Intelligencer."²⁸ In 1836 the Society again appointed him its agent under a resolution:

"That a proper agent be appointed to visit England, Scotland, and Ireland, for the purpose of soliciting donations, to create two distinct funds, viz: one for distributing the book entitled 'Joseph and Benjamin' in the English language; and another for getting it translated and printed in the German language."

Frey thereupon returned to England. He remained abroad three years.²⁹ Although he succeeded in having his "Joseph and Benjamin"³⁰ translated into German and circulated throughout Germany, and was very actively engaged in England, the trip turned out a financial disaster. He returned to New York in 1839 and engaged in a controversy with the Board of the American Society, which refused to re-employ him.³¹ Thereupon he prevailed upon

²⁸ It only ran through one volume, 1836-1837.

²⁹ He travelled 8000 miles through England, Scotland, and Ireland, visited 437 congregations, preached 533 times to collect funds.

³⁰ By 1840 this was in its seventh edition, and finally reached a tenth edition. Besides the works already mentioned, Frey was also the author of the following:

Essays on Christian Baptism, Boston, 1829. Four editions.

Essays on the Passover. New York, 1834.

Lecture on the Scripture Types, 1841. Three editions.

A report of his late Agency in Europe, containing much interesting and important information respecting the present state of the Jews, New York, 1840.

Lectures on the Messiah, New York, 1844. Two editions.

The Hebrew Messenger. Two volumes.

And he edited The Theological Lectures of the late David Bogue, D.D., New York (2d edition, 1849).

³¹ "Finding, on my return from Europe, that there are not less than 10,000 of my Jewish brethren residing in this City [New York], I proposed to the Board to engage me as a missionary to

the South Baptist Church in Nassau Street to allow him to use its place of worship to preach to the Jews. In the meantime he accepted a call from the Bethel Baptist Church at Williamsburg, L.I., at four dollars a week.

In 1843-1844 he toured through the South and Southwest, and finally settled at Pontiac, Mich. Then he gave part of his time to teaching Hebrew at the University of Michigan, becoming its first instructor in that language.³²

From that time on his career is of little public interest. He died at Pontiac, June 5, 1850, in his seventy-ninth year.³³

In the meantime the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews struggled along through varying conditions of fortune,³⁴ leading a troubled life of conflict and controversy.³⁵ As the days of the Civil War approached, it seems to have drifted into misfortune. Its

the Jews in this city, if but during the winter; but this also they refused."—Judah and Israel, p. 163.

³² I have not been able to verify this from the records of the University of Michigan, but it is asserted in a biographical sketch of Frey written by his friend Sprague.

³³ After the publication of Israel's Advocate had been suspended, the Society for a time sponsored a monthly publication, "The Jewish Chronicle," along the same line. It was printed first in newspaper form, but in 1844 it was brought out in an octavo of 32 pages. From 1842-1848 Rev. John Lillie was editor. He was then succeeded by Rev. Alexander H. Wright, who in turn gave way to the Rev. Edwin R. MacGregor. Nine (?) volumes were published.

³⁴ The International Monthly Magazine, vol. 1, p. 11.

³⁵ "In the meantime I may add that the society is not in very good odour. It has been discarded by all the old school Presbyterian churches and the only agents of any worth which it had are now laboring in connection with the Home Mission Board of that church. It gets little support in New York where its facts and its history are best known."—The Jewish Society of New York arraigned at the Bar of Public Opinion. Rev. Robert Burns, D.D., Toronto, 1853, p. 33.

fortieth report, of 1860, shows that "the Society meets in a condition of feebleness and of almost inaction." It was trying to disentangle its pecuniary affairs and to satisfy judgments which had been obtained against it in 1855. It was still employing three converted Jews in New York City, but had no other activities. In the last three years its income had only been \$11,783.36, of which \$10,000 was a legacy. There was still litigation going on between its officers.

At this period political, not religious, controversies were absorbing the energy of the nation. As a whole the American people had become better acquainted with the Jews as neighbors. By 1860 the Jewish population numbered upwards of 50,000, scattered all over the country. The American religious horizon had broadened and the missionary zeal for converts was no longer the predominant manifestation of militant Christianity. The country no longer had time or attention for the Society or its cause.

APPENDIX.

As an illustration of what was circulating as an expression of the public interest in the Jews and its attitude towards them, the following is an article which appeared in one of the leading New England newspapers of the day, the "Boston Journal," which article was later reprinted and circulated in the June number, 1837, of the "Jewish Intelligencer."

The Jews.

The people of this ancient nation, although scattered abroad on the face of the earth, are still numerous, vastly more so than would at first appear, and still preserve all the characteristics which distinguished this remarkable nation two thousand years ago. The history of the Jews since the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, furnishes a striking illustration of the physical difficulty in the way of changing the character of a distinct nation or race. The Jews have had the strongest inducements to abandon the customs and religion of their forefathers, but they have continued Jews. Persecution, in its most hideous form, has been their lot. The monarchs of great empires have made it a point of their religion to shed the blood of the Jews. In some Christian countries it has been regarded as a crime of inconsiderable magnitude to kill a Hebrew. The Jews have been accused of crimes of which they were not guilty, and hundreds and thousands, without distinction of sex or age, have fallen beneath the sword of the executioner, and their worldly possessions divided among their oppressors. Often have they been compelled to purchase temporary tranquillity by surrendering their wealth; contumely has everywhere been heaped upon them; their very name has been a by-word and a reproach throughout the civilized world, but they have never even for a moment forgotten or denied their religion, their customs, or *name*.

There is much in the general character of the Jews of which we cannot approve; but it should be recollected that the vices of individuals are frequently the result of the contempt and injustice which they experience. We ought rather to wonder that, subject to oppression and outrage from all classes of Christians for so many centuries, the Jews have preserved many of their national virtues. This people have always been distinguished for their zealous fulfillment of their religious duties,

and also for the happiness of their domestic relations. A proscribed race, ineligible to offices of trust, profit, or honor, they have looked to their own families for a solace under oppression, and have scrupulously fulfilled the duties of a husband and father—seeking in domestic felicity the consolations which are sought elsewhere by members of the Christian community.

The Jews love each other, and never refuse aid to a brother in distress. Charity to individuals of their own persuasion is most religiously observed. While the large cities in Christian communities are overrun with mendicants, a Jew has hardly ever been known to solicit alms. The indigent are succored—all uniting to relieve distress, especially when caused by misfortune. A Christian might take a profitable lesson here.

The Jews have been reproached with their avidity to acquire riches—with their deep devotion to wealth, which seems to be the most prominent trait in their character. This, however, is probably more the effect of the contempt in which they are held by Christians than the cause; and perhaps may be more owing to their habitual industry, their business qualifications, and the thorough knowledge which they seem to possess of every branch of trade, than to a morbid wish to increase their hoards. It is to the mercantile knowledge and enterprise of this people that the commercial world is indebted for Bills of Exchange, a great facility to commerce—and Jews have been the factors of princes and monarchs for ages.

The Jews do not neglect the cause of education among their people, and many of their Rabbies are very learned, but unfortunately the writings of the Jews have been principally of a controversial kind. The Talmud, which is in the hands of every one, is a compendium of the opinions and traditions which constitute their oral law—indeed it may be regarded as the civil and canonical code of the Hebrews.

The Jews have no country, and thus we find a prophecy fulfilled. They reside in every civilized country in Europe. Numbers are found in Asia, in every province between Constantinople and Pekin; and not a few have wandered to the New World, and settled in the southern parts of the United States, in the West Indies, or South America. It is thus exceedingly difficult to estimate the number of this proscribed people who now inhabit the earth; probably it does not vary much from *five millions*. The customs and laws of this people have always been favorable to the increase of population. Marriages are recommended at an early age, and in the East every Hebrew who is not married at

the age of twenty years, is regarded as a criminal. In those countries the Jews practice polygamy; and divorces among this sect are everywhere permitted. Besides, the Jews are sober and industrious, and no people practice with more strictness the virtue of conjugal fidelity; and they are exempted from military service, which has destroyed so many millions of human beings.

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